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RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEAORC/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DTRA DULLES WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
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[W. KULLMAN](#))

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SUBJECT: MERIDA INITIATIVE - CENTRAL AMERICA - ARRIVAL OF
ATF REGIONAL FIREARMS ADVISOR IN SAN SALVADOR

[1](#)1. This cable announces the arrival of the Merida Initiative - Central America funded Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Regional Firearms Advisor (RFA), Supervisory Special Agent Mark Jones, in San Salvador, El Salvador.

[1](#)2. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES: Under the Merida Initiative, the RFA will support the U.S. Government's efforts to enhance the capacity of the seven governments of the Central American region to combat arms trafficking and encourage the marking and tracing of all firearms manufactured, imported, confiscated or seized in the region. The RFA will also support USG anti-trafficking programs in the region; promote U.S. programs that seek to focus Central American states in their efforts on identifying and curbing the sources and methods of the illicit trade through the tracing of firearms used in crimes; enhance national and regional law enforcement cooperation; manage assistance to police and other justice sector entities involved in reducing firearms crime and violence; and, in coordination with other international and USG agencies, support the expeditious destruction of excess stocks and safeguard legitimate stocks from theft or illegal transfer.

Specific tasks that will be carried out by the RFA include:

[1](#)A. The RFA, supplemented by TDY ATF staff, will conduct firearms assessments in each host nation to determine the firearms trafficking threat in Central America; will assess the effectiveness of existing host nation laws regarding the marking and tracing of firearms, as well as laws aimed to reducing the threat of the trafficking of firearms to, through or within each nation. The RFA will also assess host nation law enforcement firearms forensic capabilities.

[1](#)B. Providing training and technical assistance based upon the findings of the national assessments, on an individual

country and regional basis. The regional advisor will also train customs, police and court officials in firearms investigative, tracing and forensic techniques based upon the results of the national firearms legislative and capacity assessments.

¶C. Providing technical assistance to appropriate ranking law enforcement and other justice sector officials to develop a long-term strategy to strengthen anti-trafficking activities.

¶D. In conjunction with host country and other USG organizations, will evaluate the most effective way to increase the availability of information on illicit trafficking and traffickers. This will include tools such as the use of eTrace and ballistic identification technologies, as well as the analysis of recovered firearms and ammunition. The goal will be to increase regional and U.S. access to accurate information.

¶E. Will Provide advice and assistance in the preparation of documentation for the procurement of technical services, training and commodities and the monitoring of procurement actions, including drafting source-origin waivers, bid solicitations, scopes of work, and delivery and acceptance of items procured. This includes equipment, including hardware and software, needed to facilitate information sharing, such as eTrace access.

¶F. Implement anti-trafficking prevention activities, ensuring that law enforcement and prevention activities are part of an integral program.

¶3. CONTACT INFORMATION: RFA Supervisory Special Agent Mark D. Jones may be reached at:

Mark D. Jones
Regional Firearms Advisor - Central America
Supervisory Special Agent
U.S. Department of Justice - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives
U.S. Embassy San Salvador
(503) 2501-2220 (Desk)
(503) 7736-9784 (Cell)
Class E-Mail: jonesmarkd@state.sgov.gov
Unclassified E-Mail: jonesmd2@state.gov

¶4. HOW TO UTILIZE THE RFA - REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE: We encourage Posts to contact the RFA directly to identify areas in which the RFA can add value to Post and host nation law enforcement efforts to reduce firearms trafficking to, through and within your country, as well as the strengthening of host nation firearms legislation and the enhancement of national firearms investigative, forensics and tracking capabilities. The RFA will prioritize requests for assistance, and will coordinate with the other agencies (e.g. FBI, DEA, U.S. ICE), including the Department, for requests for assistance that require the involvement of other agencies to fulfill a Post/host nation request. The expenses for the RFA are centrally funded from Washington, and travel and per diem costs incurred by the RFA in support of regional firearms interdiction training and technical assistance to host nation law enforcement personnel will not be charged to Posts.

¶5. RFA OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT: The RFA reports to ATF's Office of International Affairs. Department of State program management of the ATF Advisor falls under the Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation - EXBS (POC: Nils Johanson - FY 2008 Supplemental NADR funds) and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (POC: Matt Steinhelfer - FY 2009 Omnibus INCLE funds). The RFA is required to seek Country Clearance for all travel to CEN countries, and will inform Posts in advance of projected in-country activities in support of Merida Initiative firearms trafficking and interdiction assistance activities.

¶6. WHA asks that Posts support the RFA in any way that they can, including providing Public Affairs and logistics

support, and that upon the RFA's first visit to a CEN Post, that the RFA be provided the opportunity to brief the entire Country Team and Law Enforcement/Merida Working Group on the assistance that he can bring to bear in each CEN country.

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